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THE BIBLE TESTED;

IS IT THE BOOK FOR TO-DAY AND FOR THE WORLD?

OR,

The Bible in India.

A SERMON PREACHED BY APPOINTMENT BEFORE THE

American Bible Society,

*In the Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City,
May 5th, 1878.*

BY

JACOB CHAMBERLAIN, M.D., D.D.,

MISSIONARY IN THE ARCOT MISSION, INDIA, OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

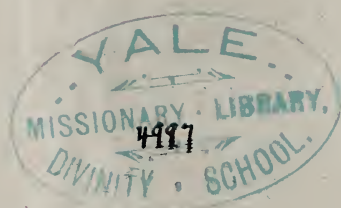
NEW YORK:

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY,

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[FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY, MAY 9, 1878.]

At the Annual Meeting of the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, held at the Bible House this day, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. Jacob Chamberlain, M. D., of India, for the valuable Discourse delivered by him in this city on Sabbath evening last, in behalf of this Society, and that a copy of the same be requested for publication.



THE BIBLE TESTED;

Is it the Book for To-Day and for the World?

“The law of the Lord is perfect.”—*Psalms* xix. 7.

THE word “law,” or the expression, “the law of the Lord,” is used in two senses in the Bible: the first confines it to the law of Moses.

On my recent journey home from India, after passing up through the length of the Red Sea, I turned aside and went down through the desert, and came to and climbed to the summit of Mount Sinai. I stood on the very spot where, thirty-three centuries before, amid thunderings and lightnings, that law was delivered by Jehovah to Moses. I looked out on that beautiful, triangular plain, some five miles long by three broad, shut in by high mountains on every side, and coming up to the foot of the almost perpendicular Sinai—“the mount that might be touched”—from every part of which plain the summit of the mount might be seen, and the cloud resting on the mount. I remembered that, when that law was delivered, all of the worshippers of the true God, Jehovah, in the then world, were gathered on that plain waiting for their divine orders—for that law, the observance of which should make them “a peculiar people”—until the time when the Nazarene should appear, and, breaking down the encircling walls of exclusiveness, should gather in all nations, even us Gentiles, unto himself; and I thought how all-important was it that the law then and there delivered should be “perfect.” And it is perfect. The learning, the sagacity, the ingenuity of all succeeding ages have utterly failed

to produce so perfect a code of morals as was there proclaimed. This Christianity's worst enemies have always admitted. Aye, the "moral law" successfully challenges the admiration of the whole world as a perfect law.

But the expression, "the law of the Lord," is used in a broader sense. It means, the whole revealed will of God, as contained in the book called "the Bible." And in this its broadest sense, we are prepared to fling down the gauntlet and challenge the contradiction of the world, while we declare and maintain that "the law of the Lord is perfect."

I. First, take it as a literary production. Where do we find such sublime poetic imagery as in the Bible? where such exactness and accuracy of historic detail, as evidenced by known profane history, and more and more by each successive Assyrian and Egyptian discovery? where such majestic soarings of prophetic vision? where such faithful portrayal of character in biography? where such intensity and sublimity of the righteous denunciation of the wrong? where such inimitable pleadings with those who needlessly are "weary and heavy laden?" where such winning portrayals of the divine life in man, as in the parables that Jesus spoke?

But there is another test of literary productions, which but few books indeed can stand. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has stood that test measurably well; but how many other books are there that can? I mean the test of *translation* into diverse languages of dissimilar people, of different modes of thought and varied forms of expressing their thoughts and conceptions. *Shakspeare* translated into French, we are told, is emasculated; how if translated into Chinese? How would *Mrs. Partington* sound in German? *Longfellow*, or *Tennyson*, in Hottentot? *Irving* in Arabic? or *Whittier* in Choctaw? The *Bible* has stood this crucial test in the languages of all quarters of the globe. And in this matter I speak from some experience and from extended observation; for—having been engaged for years

in the work of translating the Scriptures from the Hebrew into one of the most polished of the languages of the East ; having, in my journeys, visited the mission stations of forty different missionary societies, labouring in twenty-nine different languages ; and having conversed with many of those engaged in translating the Bible into those languages, as well as with others, in Europe and America, engaged in similar work—I know whereof I affirm when I repeat the declaration, that the Bible has stood this crucial test of translation in the languages of all quarters of the globe. From Greenland to Patagonia, in the western hemisphere ; from Iceland through Europe and Asia to the Japanese and the Australians, in the eastern ; from the Copts of Egypt to the Kafirs of South Africa ; from the South Sea Islands of the Pacific through the oceans to Madagascar—the Bible has been rendered into their languages with triumphant success.

Moses's history of the creation and of the early world ; Joshua's wars and marches ; the defeats and victories under the judges and kings ; David's penitential prayers and psalms of praise ; Solomon's peerless proverbs ; Isaiah's splendid imagery ; Jeremiah's doleful lamentations ; Luke the physician's wonderful life-pictures of Christ on earth, and of the founding of the early Christian church ; Paul's masterly orations at Athens, and before the Sanhedrim and Felix, and his doctrinal epistles, so full of strong meat ; John's marvellous revelation—these all come with the same force, and adaptedness, and sweetness, and conviction, in each of the two hundred and eleven languages into which the divine Book has been already translated, and witness to us that, in this respect, *it is perfect*.

II. Again, take the Bible in its adaptedness to all the races and peoples, as well as languages, of mankind. And in this respect, the American Bible Society has taken its full share in putting the Bible to the proof, for it has scattered it among all peoples. Are you aware, my friends, how cosmopolitan this Society is ? You know of its work

at home, but how many of you know of the extent of its work abroad, in all the corners of the earth? Aye, fathers and brethren—officers and managers of this Society—do you yourselves clearly realize how extensive is the work which you are carrying on? It has fallen to my lot, during the last score of years, to witness some of the workings of your Society in the distribution of Scriptures in widely-separated localities, among people speaking a score and a half of languages; and I delight to bear my testimony, to-night, to this phase of the Society's work. I have, myself, expended thousands of dollars of your funds in the printing and circulation of Scriptures in *five* of the chief languages of India.

I have seen your Bibles read and loved in the cities and villages and plains of Madras—aye, in the regions there so recently decimated by famine, many a convert to our Jesus has delighted to forget the gnawings of hunger, while, with his dim eye, he read from your Scriptures of Him who gives to his children the bread and the water of life. I have seen it read with rapture all night long, in the native kingdoms, by those who had that day for the first time, and through the efforts of your Society, heard of and seen the word of God.

I have seen it read and loved by the Telugus of Rajahmundry, and Ongole, and Cuddapah, and Kurnool; by the Canarese people of Mysore; by the Tamils of North and South Arcot, and Salem, and Coimbatore; by the Badagas of the Mountains; by the Kois of the Godavery; and the Marathis of Bombay.

The Copts of Egypt I have seen gather under the shadow of the Pyramids to read from your Arabic Scriptures the story of Joseph, and Moses, and Jesus, in their long ago sojourn there.

At Beersheba, and Hebron, and Mount Moriah, we read again with a thrill, from your Scriptures, the story of Abraham and the offering up of Isaac.

In Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, we joined an assembly made up of the descendants of Ishmael and of Isaac, of

Shem and of Ham and of Japheth, while from a translation of the Bible, made at your expense, they read the oracles of God.

At Shechem and Nazareth we found your Bibles.

At Sidon the noble Christian congregation were reading from your Scriptures the prophecy of the destruction of their city, and the sister city Tyre, and its wonderful fulfillment.

At Beirut we found your presses busily sending off their daily fruitage of leaves for the healing of the nations, to the 150,000,000 who speak the Arabic tongue.

On the hills over Antioch 1,200 Christians gathered in one assemblage to hear what this Bible was doing in India, and read from your Bible, in the Armenian tongue, the story of the formation of the first foreign missionary society in their ancient city, more than 1,800 years before.

In Smyrna and other cities of the Seven Apocalyptic Churches we found them trying to learn from your Scriptures how to light again on their ancient candlesticks the candles that had long gone out.

I have seen the workings of your Scriptures in Italy. Rome and Florence, and Milan and Bologna, and Naples, can not shut out its light, and already there once more the morning star is rising.

In Calvin's Geneva, your agent, M. Dardier, told me of the wonderful workings of your Scriptures in the Cantons of craggy Switzerland and the adjacent parts of France. In the gay French capital I found your Scriptures pointing men to the city of gold with gates of pearl.

Among the Esquimaux and Nascopies of Labrador I found again your Bibles, and saw how the gospel for the tropics is the gospel for the poles.

In the coloured churches of North and South Carolina, and Georgia and Alabama and Louisiana, I have seen devout Africans poring over the pages of your Bibles, and have realized that neither race nor colour need diminish aught, nor add unto the perfect teachings of God's law.

The Russian soldier stirs with his bayonet the camp-

fire to-night, that by its light he may read from Scriptures you have given him that which will nerve him for the morrow's struggle in behalf of, as he believes, his oppressed fellow Christians.

The South American republics and kingdoms are looking in its pages, as scattered by your agents, to find what it is that has raised America and England so far above them.

The scattered Islands of the Seas are learning from it that though scattered and separated they belong to the same fold, with the same Shepherd, as we do. "The isles are waiting for His law."

In Japan your Scriptures teach them that God rested on and hallowed one day in seven; and already has the Christian Sabbath displaced and replaced their multitudinous and variable feast days and holy days, and its thousand Christians are now, on their bended knees, thanking that God who through its pages issued in that land of darkness the fiat, "Let there be light."

The land of Sinim, slumbering through ages, is hearing now, through your instrumentality, and obeying the divine mandate, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Show me, if you can, the race or people where the Bibles issued by this Society have not to-day aroused the conscience, quickened the love, stimulated the zeal, dispelled the doubt, comforted the mourning, cheered the dying, among the scattered sons of the first and of the second Adam.

Since I first went to India, this Society has expended more than one and a quarter millions of dollars in gold, in giving the Bible to the races of the earth outside of our own country. It is because of this cosmopolitan work that I, a foreign missionary, every fibre of whose existence is wrought up in the missionary work, stand up on every possible occasion to advocate the claims of this Society on the blood-bought throng of Christ's sons and daughters. I would not, if I could, turn all the streams of benevo-

lence into the treasuries of our foreign missionary societies—even of my own board. The Bible must be translated, and printed, and scattered everywhere, or no missionary work could be done. A missionary without the Bible! as well try to cook without fire or heat; as well try to sail a ship without water; as well try to propel a steamer without steam; as well try to breathe without air. If the printing and benevolent distribution of the Bible cease while yet the nations are arrayed in hostility to Christ, then let it be announced to the world that the soldiers of Christ's kingdom have laid down their arms. Let it cease, and all the powers of darkness will rise and claim the victory as nearly won. Aye, the very imps of hell will hold a jubilee, for it is darkness that they love, and the Bible gives light.

III. But again, take the Bible as an *engine* devised for the performance of a certain work, and test it well and see whether it does that work or no. The Bible contains a plan devised for the redemption and elevation of mankind. Take the Bible, then, as an engine thus devised for the performance of a certain work, and test it well and see whether it does that work or no. And it is to this view of the subject that I particularly ask your attention this evening.

Is this *old Bible*, given centuries ago among the Jewish people, *now* calculated to do the work for which it was designed? or, in this day of progress and of the intermingling of nations, do we find it antiquated, and its day of adaptedness and usefulness passed away? This is, emphatically, an age not alone of changes, but of improvements. Fast mail-trains and the telegraph have taken the place of the old mounted mail-carrier, with his mail-bags thrown over the horse upon which he rode. The four and six horse stage-coach has given way to palace cars. The quiet stitching of the seamstress is replaced by the hum of the sewing machine. There is scarcely a piece of machinery, of any kind, now in use that was used even

by our grandfathers. New books, new systems of sciences, new methods in the arts—all, all is new. Have we made a mistake, then, in holding on to our “old Bible” too long? If so, let us acknowledge it like men and try to replace it with something better; but first let us put it to the proof and see.

Now, in testing a machine or engine it is necessary to try it in all the different circumstances in which it is to be employed, especially in the worst. For example: when I was in India, during the war in America, the government of India sought to introduce the best machinery for ginning, and spinning, and weaving the cotton growing there. A proclamation was issued, and published in every country where machinery was made, offering a princely premium for that machinery that should best do the work. And when, after near a year for preparation, the machinery was gathered from the four quarters on the banks of the sacred Ganges, when the viceroy and his council and the judges had assembled to test it, it was tried not alone with the cotton grown there on the banks of the Ganges, but cotton was brought from the base of the Himalaya Mountains, and from the plains of Tinnevely, near Cape Comorin, from the hill country of Berar, and from the plains of Bellary, and the country about Bombay; and the machinery that best did the work in all, the long staple and the short, the coarse and the fine, it was that that won the prize, and that is now doing the work in India. So if an ocean steamer be launched, it must be tried not alone on the smooth waters of the bay or river on whose banks it was constructed, for until it has crossed the ocean, breasting the mountain billows in a storm, no one can tell whether after all it be a safe vehicle for human life. So with every kind of machinery—it must be tested in the worst circumstances in which it will be called to act.

For the last score of years I have been engaged in putting the Bible to just such a test, and that in the most unpropitious circumstances.

India is Satan’s stronghold. Hinduism, with its hand-

maid caste, weaves iron fetters around its votaries. With much of truth in its scriptures, the Védas, it has degenerated into the worst of polytheism and idolatry; with its defective view of God and man, it has had no conservating, elevating influence over its votaries. The Hindus are at once a very religious, and a grossly immoral people. Intelligent, sharp, quick-witted, immutable in their nature, wedded to their ancient system, which is a splendid one though false, the Brahminists are the most able and determined adversaries of what they term the "new religion." If the Bible will work in India, then we may safely conclude that it will work anywhere. How, then, does it work in India? Let us test it in various ways and see.

And first: Does this "old Bible," given so many centuries ago among the Jews, describe the human heart of to-day, and the condition of man in different lands? or is it antiquated and defective in this respect?

On a certain occasion, some fourteen years ago, I went into a native city in India, where the name of Jesus had never been heard, there for the first time to show them and give them these Scriptures, and to preach to them of Christ and his salvation. As an introduction, when we had assembled an audience in the street, I asked my native assistant to read the first chapter of Romans—the chapter a part of which has been read in your hearing to-night; that chapter which those who call themselves liberal-minded tell us is too black to be true; that chapter that describes the heart of man wandering away from God and into sin, and conceiving vile conceptions of God, and then wandering away farther, until at last, "though they know the judgments of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them;" the chapter which many tell us is a libel upon human nature. That chapter was read. The most intelligent man in the audience, a Brahmin, stepped forward and said to me, "Sir, that chapter must have been written for us Hindus. *It describes us exactly.*" The

photograph was recognized. It had been taken centuries before, and among a Jewish people; but the artist was divine, and the heart that was photographed was that, not of a *Jew*, but of a *man*.

On another occasion I went into another city, there also for the first time to proclaim Christ as the way of life. As we entered the native town and passed up the main street, I noticed a small Hindu temple, built upon the side of the busiest street, with its doors open and the idols in at the farther end, so that passers-by could worship as they went. At the side of the door sat the Brahmin priest of the temple on a pedestal, unclad down to the waist—that he might receive the homage, the semi-divine worship which the people were wont to render him—with a platter by his side to receive their offerings as they went in and out of the street to their business or their work. I noticed it and passed on. Going up the main street, and looking here and there and finding no better place, we came back to this temple; and as I politely asked permission of the Brahmin to address an audience from the steps of the temple, he as politely gave his permission; and singing a song to bring the people together, we soon had the street packed with those who wondered what we had come for, and I preached to them. I took for my theme “the character of any being whom the intelligent mind of man in any land would be willing to call God;” and from the necessities of our natures, I attempted to show them that in order to call any being God, we must believe him to be stronger than we and stronger than any powers that might be arrayed against us; that he must be *omnipotent*, or we could not trust him; that he must be wiser than we and wiser than any intelligences that might be combined against us; that he must be *omniscient*; that he must be able, in all parts of his dominion, at the same time, to be and to notice all passing events; that he must be *omnipresent*; that he must be a God of love, a God of justice, and so on. I had painted to them the character and attributes of God as we find them given in our Bible—not

telling them where I found the picture, but drawing this characterization of God from the necessities of the soul of man. The intelligent men in the audience at once acknowledged the picture to be a correct one, as I went on from point to point, and admitted what I said to be true. At last, completing the picture, I said to them, "Now, who is God, and where is God?" The Brahmin priest sitting there on his pedestal, seeing how intently the audience of his worshippers were listening to my description of God, so different from that enshrined in the temple at my side, and seeing at a glance, with his keen mind, that if this description of God was accepted as true his employment was gone, seeking to create a diversion, straightened himself up, and with his finger drawing a line around his stomach, he said, "Sir, *this* is my God; when this is full, my God is propitious; when this is empty, my God is angry. Only give me enough to eat and drink, and that is all the God I want." Turning to this same old Book, I gave him that scathing denunciation of Paul of those "whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, and whose end is destruction." And then turning again to the audience and reminding them of the pure and holy character that I had described, I told them that "this poor, miserable wretch here is willing to call his belly his God." Amid the sneers and scorn of his own worshippers, he sprang from his pedestal, slunk around the corner of the temple, and vanished down a side street. And oh, how the audience listened while I described to them Him in whom all the fullness of this Godhead was manifested bodily, even Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of all of them, in all the world, that will believe in him!

On another occasion I was reading from the seventh chapter of Romans that declaration of Paul of the power of sin over us, where he says, "When I would do good, evil is present with me, and the good which I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do." As I read it the most intelligent man in my audience spoke up, saying, "That is it! that is it! That is exactly what is the

matter with us Hindus. Now, does your Book tell us how we can get rid of that evil disposition, and do the good we would and avoid doing the evil that we would not?" How gladly, from this same old book, did I point them to Him who can create a new heart and renew a right spirit within us; who can give us not only the desire, but the power to do good: "For I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

On another occasion and in a different city I read the description in the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, of the making and worshipping of images. When I had completed the reading, a sharp man in the audience, a Brahmin, stepped out and said, "Now, sir, we have caught you. You told us that this was an old book, given long ago in another part of the world to tell us how we might find God, and, how worshipping him we might attain to peace with him; but, sir, that that you have just read you have written since you came here and saw how we Hindus managed it." The photograph once more was recognized.

But again, can this Book be understood by high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant? Can this Bible that was given to a people prepared through generations by a special training, and standing on a very different moral plane from the Hindus of the present day—this Book with its pure and holy doctrines, its strange, though beautiful and simple plan of salvation—can it be understood by those Hindus who have sunken through centuries of moral pollution—can it be understood so as to affect their lives and their character?

Come with me to a little town 150 miles to the northwest of my station at Mudnapilly, in India. Some fifteen years ago there lived there a Hindu, an unlettered man—he could simply read and write, and that was all—who felt the burden of sin and desired relief. He had tried all that his system taught him, and still found no peace of conscience. There came the time of the annual drawing of the idol car (usually called the car of Juggernaut), in a city some thirty miles away, and this man, mourning

over his sin, went there, for they told him if he would engage in the ceremonies there and join in the drawing of the car the burden of sin would be gone and he could find relief. He went there. The first day passed, and the second day of the festivities was nearly through. That night it would close, and he felt yet the burden of sin. He knew that he had not got relief. He saw standing in the crowd a man with a book, wrapped in his garments; he saw the end sticking out, and asked, "Stranger, what book is that you have got there?" Said he, "They call it the *Kotta Nibandana*" (the New Testament). "What is that?" "Why, they say it is the *Sattya Vêda*," (the True *Vêda*, as we term the Bible in India, in distinction from their *Vêdas* which we do not acknowledge as true). "Have you read it?" "No, I have not." "What does it tell about, anyhow?" "Why, they say that it tells us how to get rid of sin." "Does it; will you sell it?" "Yes." "How much will you take for it?" "Well, give me half a rupee," (twenty-five cents). "All right." He took out the money and gave it to the man and took the book, wrapped it up, put it under his arm and went away. When he got home he opened it at the first chapter of Matthew, and stumbled and tumbled down over those jaw-breaking names in the genealogy of Christ, worse for a Hindu than they are for us to pronounce. He thought that after all there was not going to be anything in the book that he could understand, and that he had lost his money; but he got through at last, and came to the story of the miraculous birth of the child Jesus; *that* he could understand. He read on, and read the story of his wonderful childhood, and his marvellous life, his miraculous deeds, and the messages of mercy that he gave to all around him; and then, when he was beginning to think that he must be the one that should redeem all lands, he came to the story where he was killed and nailed upon a cross. Oh, it was all up then, he thought; but he read on amid his tears; he read of his lying in the grave, and then of that wonderful coming forth again from the grave,

and of the scene when he appeared to his disciples, and with astonishment he read how on Mount Olivet, parting the clouds, he ascended to heaven; and then he turned over and read again in the next Evangelist, in fewer words, the story of the same life. Then he read on in a third Evangelist that same story, that is never repeated too often—Luke's graphic life-picture of Christ on earth. Then he came to the fourth Evangelist, and there he read of the divine sonship of that Jesus of Nazareth, the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us; and he learned there of our connection with Christ, the branch with the vine, how he would remain with us; then he read the story of the founding of the early Christian church. That gave him more light. He read the doctrinal epistles, and feeling the burden of sin as he did, he did not stumble over those hard doctrines as some on this side of the water do. He read that story, that wonderful revelation of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven out of God, the home of all those that believe in Jesus, when they shall arise and meet him.

Ah, that was the book for him. He read in the book that they were not to forget the assembling of themselves together on the first day of the week, as the manner of some is—of some perhaps in this country too—and on the first day of their week, which, singularly, synchronizes with our Christian Sabbath, he gathered his neighbours in his own house to hear him read from "the wonderful Book." He taught his wife to read, a strange thing for a Hindu to do, as they never used to teach their women to read; but he taught her to read in order that she might be able to read from "the Book." He learned in that, "When ye pray thus shall ye say, 'Our Father which art in heaven;'" and as they assembled thus on each Sabbath day they joined, after reading the word, in repeating that prayer. Some years passed by and the man died. When he died he told his wife that they must not burn his body as the Hindus are wont to do, but bury it, for Christ was buried; that they must not perform any

heathen ceremony over his grave, but read from "the Book" and repeat "the prayer," and leave him there with God; for as Christ arose from the dead so would he some day arise and meet that Christ in heaven. His wife kept up the reading, on the first day of the week, to the people from this book. Years more passed by. At last there came two missionaries into a village some fifteen miles from this place. They were preaching there to the people, as they supposed for the first time that they had heard of Christ and his salvation, when two men that happened to be there in the market-place stepped forward and said, "Why, sirs, what you say is exactly what the man of 'the Book' down at our village used to teach." They asked about it and learned the story. They went down there and found to all intents and purposes a little church of Jesus Christ established. It was the Book that had done it. They had not received baptism nor the Lord's Supper to be sure, but they had that life in their hearts that was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Book had shown that it could be understood and could produce its effect.

That was among the lowly; how among the higher classes that have the Védas, with their purer teachings, the Brahmins of India? How does this Bible work among them? *Is it adapted to meet their felt wants?*

Some fifteen years ago I took a long journey of five months through a native kingdom that had never before been traversed, so far as I could learn, by any missionary, and where the Scriptures had never been circulated. I took the journey, an exploring and Bible distributing journey, at the expense of the American Bible Society. We were warned that we should meet with dangers and difficulties. We did meet with them abundantly; but on the way the Master gave us such cheering signs of his presence that we were willing to go on. We had been warned not to go because of the danger, and were told that we would never all of us get home alive; but I read in my commission, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the

gospel to every creature." It did not say, "except Hyderabad;" and believing my commission was to be carried out I went, taking with me four native assistants. I well remember one Saturday when we had attempted to cross a wide river in basket-boats, and had been swept down the stream three miles in crossing. At last we had gained the shore, but we had been delayed so long that it was midnight, Saturday night, before we reached the town where we wished to spend the night. Camping outside the city we spent the rest of the night. Sabbath morning in our camp we held our prayer meeting, myself and four native preachers and attendants, reading from the word and talking over the power and goodness of Christ; and in the afternoon we thought that though we had intended to rest that Sabbath we must go out to the bazaar and tell the people of this divine word. We went. A large audience assembled around us. We preached to them of Christ and his salvation. We distributed Scriptures and tracts among them, and came back before sundown to our camp, intending to lie down to rest very early, as we must start on our journey at half-past four the next morning, as was our wont; when ere the sun had set a group of men came out of the town with books in their hands saying to us, "Sirs, this is such wonderful news that you have told us. Won't you please come back and talk to us some more about it. The idea of a way of getting rid of sin without ourselves, by the help of a Divine Redeemer! It is wonderful. Please come back and talk to us some more about it." We went back. The market-place was covered with India rugs and Persian rugs, and with pillows for us to sit upon, for they said they wanted us to talk longer than we could stand to talk. There were stakes driven in the ground-floor, with little native lamps on them to light when it should grow dark, for they said they wanted us to talk long after it was dark. They kept us reading and talking until ten o'clock at night, and would not let us go. When at last we told them that they must allow us to rest, for we were very weary and had to start

early in the morning, they allowed us to leave and we went and laid down to rest.

At half-past four in the morning we had arisen; our carts were packed and we were just starting, when out came a deputation from the town with books in their hands, with the leaves turned down here and there; for they said they had been reading the books all night long, for they were sure they would never have another chance to ask questions about them; and it was such strange news, and so good if true, they wanted to be sure that they understood all about it, and they had come to ask some questions before I started. I said to my native assistants, "You go on. Three miles north of here, I understand, is the town of Pebéri. As you are walking and I have a horse, you go on, and I will stop and answer these questions, and then canter on as rapidly as I can and overtake you. If you get there before I do, go into the town and offer the Scriptures and tracts for sale." We could not give them away there. There was a reason for it that I cannot stop here to explain. "You go on, and I will join you as soon as I can." They went on; I stopped and answered the questions. They asked a great many earnest questions. When I attempted to mount my horse, they put their hands on my shoulder and said, "No, sir—you cannot go until you answer some more questions." I answered a few more and tried to spring on my horse again and go on, as I did not like to leave my native assistants to encounter danger alone, if there were danger, and wished to hasten on. But they said, "No, sir; answer some more questions; don't go yet." I stayed three-quarters of an hour and then went forward to join my assistants. I cantered on as rapidly as I could, and as I approached the town of Pebéri, which was a walled town with gates, I saw my native assistants coming away from the town accompanied by some natives. Speaking in the Tamil language, which was not understood by the people there, I said to them, "Would not they let you go into the town? would not they let you preach? could you not dispose of any books?"

"Yes, sir," said they, "we preached to a most intensely-interested audience, and when we offered our books and tracts for sale they bought every one of them; we haven't a single one left; they paid for them all and wanted more. We told them you had your saddlebags full of books, and they have come out here to meet you and buy more books."

Turning to them, I said (in their own language, the Telugu), "Brothers, I have plenty of books—you shall have all you want. But first let us go back into the town, and I will tell you some more about this wonderful news." We went back into the town. I saw that they were the chief men of the place. There in the square before the gate was the platform for the elders of the city to sit upon and administer the affairs of the town, as in ancient Jewish times. They escorted me to that platform and wished me to sit with them. As I preferred to stand and talk, so that I could be heard by a larger audience, they said they would stand too, for they did not wish to sit while their teacher was standing—it would not be polite. Standing there, I proclaimed to them again the gospel of eternal life through Jesus Christ. When I had done speaking, I took my saddlebags from the horse and offered them the books, and at once there was a rush for the books. I gave out book after book, and still they pressed upon me until every book was gone, and then there were forty hands held out, over the shoulders of those before them, with money in them; and they said, "Here, sir, take what money you please, only give me a book that tells about the Divine Father that you have told us about."—"Give me a book that tells about Jesus Christ and his salvation."—"Give me a book that tells about heaven and how I can get there."—"Take what money you please, only do give me a book." I told them, "Brothers, I am very sorry I did not know there were so many educated men here, and that so many books would be wanted. I have a cart-load of books that have gone on in advance, which I might have stopped for you to buy all you want." They said, "How far has

the cart gone?" Judging from the time, I said that it must have got about three miles. They said, "If we go on and overtake the cart, will you stop it and let us buy the books?" "Certainly," said I. They at once appointed a deputation to go on and buy the books. Five were appointed. As I had been talking, I particularly noticed two who stood upon the platform, almost in front of me—a Brahmin with venerable white hair and noble brow, a very courteous and intelligent gentleman, and his son, as I judged from his countenance, standing at his side. They had interrupted me now and then, as I was preaching, saying to me, "Wait a moment, sir; won't you explain that point a little further? this is such strange news, we want to be sure that we get it exactly right." I would explain the point and then go on, and soon they would stop me again, asking intelligent questions, anxious to understand everything I said. They were among the deputation that were appointed to go forward. The people put money in their hands, each one telling them, "Don't you forget to buy me a book."—"Buy me a book that tells of Jesus and his love."—"Buy me one of those books that tell about the Creator, the Divine Father that loves us."—"Get me a book that tells how I can get rid of my load of sin." So they commissioned them and sent them. We went out of the gate of the city and turned into the pathway where my carts had gone—native carts with wooden wheels, drawn by young buffaloes.

We walked on for a time, they asking earnest questions and I answering them, when they said, "Sir, we are going no faster than the carts are; would you mind cantering on to overtake the carts and stop them; and then you must talk to us some more." I put spurs to my horse and rode on. I had gone perhaps a mile and a quarter, and got into the thick jungle that intervened between that town and the next village, and was passing up a little tortuous cart-track through the jungle when I heard the step of a powerful horse approaching me from the rear. I had been warned that in just such a place as that I would be assas-

sinated. Thinking it always safest to face the danger, if there be danger, I stopped my horse, turned around and waited for the approach. Soon, around a bend in the road I saw a powerful Arab charger coming, with saddle and bridle bedecked with ornaments of silver and gold. Its rider had a turban with gold-lace trimmings, and with a necklace of pearls around his neck, with a jacket of India satin interwoven with threads of metallic gold. He rode rapidly on, and apparently was about passing me when he saw me, and pulling up his horse almost on to his haunches, he said, "Are you the man that has been in my town this morning with this strange doctrine?" I said, "I have been in the town of Pebéri, sir." We had been told that this town was the summer residence of a petty Rajah, a feudatory of the Nizam of Hyderabad, but that at that season of the year the Rajah was at his other capitol. He said to me—for it was the Rajah himself, "I came in late last night from my other capitol. I suppose the people did not know I was there. I got in late last night or early this morning, and we were not stirring when your people came so early. I suppose those were your men that came about sunrise with the books; but some of my courtiers were stirring and bought some of the books and brought them to the palace, and we were so busy reading the books that we did not know there was any second gathering in the streets. I wish I had known it, I would have sent out and asked you to come to the palace to tell us the news there; but when you had gone they brought some larger books, saying that the white man himself had been there and given them those books, and I was so anxious to see you that I ordered my swiftest horse, and I have outridden all my courtiers, as you see, to overtake you. Now, tell me all about it. Is it true? Is there a Saviour that can save us from our sin?" We rode on together, I on a little scraggy country pony that had cost me thirty dollars, looking up to him on his magnificent Arab charger worth a thousand, and as I trotted along talking with him I could not help thinking of Philip and the Eunuch; and I

tried as earnestly, I believe, as Philip did to tell my companion of him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did speak—even Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour of all them in all the world that would believe in him.

We overtook the cart. "Now," said he, "let me have a copy of every book you have; I don't care what you ask, I will pay for them." One box after another was opened. He took out a book about the size of a small pulpit Bible, and said he, "What book is that?" "That is the Holy Bible, the Satya Vēda, or True Vēda, in the Telugu language"—the language in which we were conversing. "Give me that." Down it went on the ground. He took up another, of one-third the size. "What is that?" "That is the New Testament in the Canarese language." "Give me that;" and down it went. "What is that?"—taking up another. "That is the New Testament in the Hindustani language." "Give me that." "What is that?" "That is the New Testament in the Tamil language." "Give me that." "What is that?" "That is the New Testament in the Maráthi language." "But," said I, "you don't want all those, for this large one contains the whole thing. These others contain part, the best part to be sure, of the large one, in the different languages. But it is the same thing, verse for verse and word for word, only that each is in a different language. You know the Telugu language best. If you take the large one in that language you have the whole;" for I wished to save some of these for use further on, in my journey. "No," said he; "if you were to be here so that I could ask questions, that large one would be enough for me, but you are not going to be here, so I shall have no one to ask questions of, and I will take it and read it in the Telugu language, and I will perhaps not quite understand it; then I will take it in the Canarese language, for I can read that just as well, and it will be a little differently expressed, and by comparing the two I will understand it; if not, then I will read it in the Hindustani language, and comparing the three I will understand it

better; or in the Marathi, or Tamil language, and comparing the four or five I shall be able to understand it all. I don't care what you ask for them, only let me have the books. I will pay for them." So he took them.

In the mean time the deputation came up. I found that the Brahmin whom I had noticed so particularly was the prime minister of the Rajah, his general manager, or *Mantri*, as they call it in India, and the son was being educated to succeed him in office. They all asked earnest questions, and kept me answering question after question and explaining the books for an hour and three-quarters, there in the road, before they would allow me to hitch on my oxen and pursue my journey. When they had bought and paid for their books, and at last had consented that I should pursue my journey, I bade them good-bye. But as we went on our way we could not help thinking of them and their earnest questions, and wondering whether the words thus scattered had done any good. We journeyed on, however, and at last after five months we came around to our homes, stricken down by disease to be sure, that we had contracted in those jungles, but all of us were alive. We came back to our homes, and still we could not forget those people. We wondered whether in that town, where they had so gladly met us and heard us preach Christ, there would be any fruit from the seed we had scattered. Three years passed by—years of sickness with me to be sure, resulting from that journey, for I had not recovered from it yet. We were still thinking of and praying for them, when the Lord allowed us to hear news from them. A chance traveller came that way—not a chance traveller; nothing ever happens by chance. God ordered, for the strengthening of my faith, and perhaps yours here to-night, that a traveller should come down through that unfrequented way, and that he should be overtaken by night at that very town of Pebéri. He was a half-caste, half Portuguese and half Hindu. He stoppéd in the rest-house built for travellers, by the gate of the city. In the evening that very *Mantri*, the Rajah's prime

minister, hearing that there was a stranger there who dressed and appeared differently from the people there, came out to meet him, and said he, "Stranger, you seem to have come from a distance; do you know anything of the people they call Christians?" "Yes, I am one myself." "Are you? I am glad of it. Stranger, do you know anything about a white man that came through here three years ago, in the month of August, with a book that he called the True Vêda, telling about the Divine Redeemer, that he called *Yesu Kristu*?" (The Telugu for Jesus Christ.) "Yes, Dr. Chamberlain is the only missionary that has ever been through here. He came this way about three years ago." "Do you know him? Have you ever seen him? Is he living now? and will you ever see him again?" "Yes, I met him years ago away up north, and in about a month I shall pass within about thirty or forty miles of where he is now living." Said he, "If you get as near him as that, you turn out of your way and find him, for I want you to carry him a message. Tell him that from the day he was here, neither my son nor I have ever worshipped an idol. Tell him that every day we read in that New Testament that he left with us, and every day we kneel and pray to that *Yesu Kristu* of whom he taught us, and tell him that through his merits we hope to meet him in heaven. Tell him the Rajah has the Bible read every day in his palace, and we think that he too at heart is a believer in Jesus. Tell him we hope to meet him by-and-by when we can tell him all about it—saved because he came here and brought us those Bibles; but if you go anywhere near him you turn out of your way and find him, and give him this message now, for it will do him good." And, oh, friends, it did do me good. When I heard that message I forgot the difficulties and perils of that journey. I forgot how we had been surrounded by tigers at night, keeping the camp-fires burning bright while we heard them roaring for prey in the jungles around us. I forgot how I had been swept away in the river. I forgot how we had been taken by

the jungle fever and deserted by all our coolies. I could not remember any of these things then. I thought of souls redeemed, and heaven's mansions peopled, and I said, "If in that one village the Bible has done this, why not in hundreds of other villages where we have left it?" Aye, methinks I can see the throng assembled around the great white throne, and it may be, that among that throng some of those dusky sons or daughters of India may come to one of you, and grasping your hand, say to you, "Brother, sister, you gave that dollar to the American Bible Society that printed that Bible that came away out to Hyderabad, and told me how to reach heaven." "Child, you gave that dime that printed the New Testament that told me how to get to heaven." And in the gladness of that hour, oh friends, will we ever, one of us, regret that we have done so much for our Master? Will we not rather wish that we had joined hands in sending this word of God into every palace and every hut on the whole globe?

Does this Bible change the character and the lives of those who embrace it? I would I could take you to a little village near my station where they had embraced Christianity in a body but eight months before, and where the high priest of the temple near by, came secretly to me in my tent, and asked me, "Sir, will you please impart to me the secret; what is it that makes that Bible of yours have such a power over the lives of those that embrace it? Now, it is but eight months since these people joined you. Before that they were quarrelsome, they were riotous, they were lazy, they were shiftless, and now see what a difference there is in them. Now they are active, they are energetic, they are laborious, they never drink, they never quarrel. Why, sir, I joined in the persecution when they became Christians and tried to stamp out Christianity before it gained a foothold here, but they stood firm, and now in all the region around here the people all respect and honour them. What is it that makes the Bible have such a power over the lives of those that embrace it?

Our Védas have no such power. Please, sir, give me the secret."

Does it sustain its recipients? Our first convert in the new region, in the Telugu country where I went in 1863, was a young Brahmin. We knew that there was danger of his being murdered and tried to guard him. But after a while—I cannot stop to give you the whole story to-night—he was decoyed away and taken over one hundred miles to a town where his relatives lived. He was immured in a close room. Nothing was left him but a cloth around his loins. In the room there was naught but a grass mat for him to lie on, with nothing to cover him. Day by day just a little rice and salt was placed there for him to eat, just enough to keep body and soul together; and he was told that he should never come out alive unless he abjured his new-fangled doctrines and came back to orthodox Hinduism. His grandfather, a wealthy man, offered half his fortune to the Brahmins if they would reconvert him. They brought the logicians, the rhetoricians, and the priests of all the region to argue with him. They had taken away his Bible. They argued with him, and they kept him for months. I have not time to tell you the thrilling story of his escape, but at last he got back to us, all skin and bones; he had lost all his flesh, but had not lost his faith and his trust in Jesus, nor his love for this Bible. He had never denied Him. A year after that we met his uncles who had imprisoned him. They said to us, "Sirs, what is it in that Bible of yours that gives such strength and courage to those that embrace it? Now, we had that nephew of ours right in our power. We told him that he should never get away alive unless he renounced Christianity, and there was no probability that he would. He expected to die from starvation there; but, sirs, every day, no matter who were there, he would kneel in his cell and he would pray to that *Yesu Kristu*, the Divine Redeemer that he called God, and when he arose there was no doing anything with him. You never saw such a stubborn fellow. What is it that makes this Bible give such nerve and such courage to those that embrace it?"

Does this Bible quell opposition? It is quick and powerful? I would I could take you to a scene in that same kingdom of Hyderabad that I witnessed fourteen years ago. There in a city, a walled town of 18,000 inhabitants, the people had arisen in a mob to drive us out because we tried to speak of another God than theirs. We had gone to the market-place and I had endeavoured to preach to them of Christ and his salvation, but they would not hear. They ordered us to leave the city at once, but I had declined to leave until I had delivered to them my message. The throng was filling the streets. They told me if I tried to utter another word I should be killed. There was no rescue; they would have the city gates closed, and there should never any news go forth of what was done. I must leave at once or I should not leave alive. I had seen them tear up the paving stones and fill their arms with them to be ready, and one was saying to another, "You throw the first stone and I will throw the next." By an artifice I need not stop now to detail, I succeeded in getting permission to tell them a story before they stoned me, and then they might stone me if they wished. They were standing around me ready to throw the stones when I succeeded in getting them to let me tell the story first. I told them the story of all stories, of the love of the Divine Father that had made us of one blood, who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." I told them the story of that birth in the manger at Bethlehem, of that wonderful childhood, of that marvellous life, of those miraculous deeds, of the gracious words that he spake. I told them the story of the cross, and pictured in the graphic words that the Master gave me that day, the story of our Saviour nailed upon the cross, for them, for me, for all the world, when he cried in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" When I told them that, I saw the men go and throw their stones in the gutter and come back, and down the cheeks of the very men that had been clamouring the loudest

for my blood I saw the tears running and dropping off upon the pavement that they had torn up; and when I had finished the story and told them how he had been laid in the grave and after three days he had come forth triumphant, and had ascended again to heaven, and that there he ever lives to make intercession for them, for us, for all the world, and that through his merits every one of them there assembled could obtain remission of sin and eternal life, I told them then that I had finished my story and they might stone me now; but no, they didn't want to stone me now; they didn't know what a wonderful story I had come there to tell them. They came forward and bought eighty copies of the Scriptures and gospels and tracts, and paid the money for them, for they wanted to know more of that wonderful Saviour of whom I had told them.

What do our enemies say of the Bible? those keen-witted Brahmins, who know their own Védas, with all their beauties, who are capable of judging of what they read. What do those our enemies say of this book? I will tell you what they say; I will give you the testimony of one of their Brahmins, not a Christian.

I had been delivering a series of lectures to the educated men in my region on their Védas and the Christian Scriptures, compared and contrasted. I had shown them by quotations from their Védas and Shastras that their Scriptures pointed out one God, pure and holy and good; the creator, and preserver, and controller of all things; that their Scriptures pointed out man in a state of sin and rebellion against that holy God. I had shown them that their Védas pointed out the fact that sinful man could not be at peace with holy God until that sin was in some way expurgated. I had shown them that their Scriptures brought man up to the edge of the gulf that yawned between sinful man and sinless God, and left him there yearning on the brink, anxious to get over but with no means of crossing; that the Christian Scriptures pointing out God as a God of purity and holiness, and man

in a state of sin, had brought man to the edge of the same chasm, but that they, in and through Jesus Christ, the God-man, had bridged that gulf; that Jesus Christ in his human nature resting on man's side, in his divine nature on God's side, bridged the gulf, and that we could all pass over, dropping our sins into the chasm as we went, and be at peace with holy God. There had been in that concluding lecture a most profound silence. The room was packed, and the windows, all open, reaching down low, were filled with the heads of those standing outside who were anxious to hear. There were no Christians present except my singing band; they were all heathen. When I had finished, offering a short prayer to the God of truth to bring us all to understand the truth, whatever it might be, and rose taking my book to leave, a Brahmin in the audience asked permission to say a few words. I said to myself, "Now there will be a tough discussion, for that man is the most learned man in the audience and the best reasoner in all this region." But I had determined to stand my ground, for I had reserve ammunition that I had not yet used. I expected him to attack the ground I had taken, for I had taken strong ground that night as to the insufficiency of their Védas; but instead of that he gave one of the most beautiful addresses that I ever listened to in any language. It was so graphic, so beautiful, that I went home and wrote it out in the English language, part of it, preserving his phraseology and idiom as far as I could, and I wish to read you a few sentences to-night to show you what he thought of the Christian Scriptures. He said:

A BRAHMIN ON THE BIBLE.

"Behold that mango tree on yonder roadside! Its fruit is approaching to ripeness. Bears it that fruit for itself or for its own profit? From the moment the first ripe fruits turn their yellow sides towards the morning sun until the last mango is pelted off, it is assailed with showers of sticks and stones from boys and men, and every passer by, until it stands bereft of leaves, with branches knocked off, bleeding from many a broken twig; and piles of stone underneath, and clubs and sticks lodged in its boughs, are the only trophies of its joyous crop of

fruit. Is it discouraged? Does it cease to bear fruit? Does it say, 'If I am barren no one will pelt me, and I shall live in peace?' Not at all. The next season the budding leaves, the beauteous flowers, the tender fruit, again appear. Again it is pelted, and broken and wounded, but goes on bearing, and children's children pelt its branches and enjoy its fruit.

"That is a type of these missionaries. I have watched them well, and have seen what they are. What do they come to this country for? What tempts them to leave their parents, friends, and country, and come to this, to them unhealthy, climate? Is it for gain or for profit that they come? Some of us country clerks in government offices receive more salary than they. Is it for the sake of an easy life? See how they work, and then tell me. No; they seek, like the mango tree, to bear fruit for the benefit of others, and that, too, though treated with contumely and abuse from those they are benefiting.

"Now, what is it makes them do all this for us? *It is their Bible.* I have looked into it a good deal at one time and another, in the different languages I chance to know. It is just the same in all languages. *The Bible*—there is nothing to compare with it in all our sacred books for goodness, and purity, and holiness, and love, and for motives of action.

"Where did the English-speaking people get all their intelligence, and energy, and cleverness, and power? It is their Bible that gives it to them. And now they bring it to us and say, 'This is what raised us; take it and raise yourselves!' They do not force it upon us, as the Mohammedans did with their Koran, but they bring it in love, and translate it into our languages, and lay it before us, and say, 'Look at it; read it; examine it, and see if it is not good.' Of one thing I am convinced: do what we will, oppose it as we may, it is the Christian's Bible that will, sooner or later, work the regeneration of this land."

"Verily, their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

The Bible has always had its enemies; so has everything that is good, in the moral or physical world. In Fulton's time the wisecracks of his day proved to a demonstration, as they thought, that his invention of a steamboat was worthless; that the plan was faulty; the engine was defective, and that it could not work. But when, on the morning set for its trial, the banks of the Hudson were lined with the anxious throng who had come to see it put to the proof; when the steam was turned on, and the wheels began to revolve, and the boat glided out, cutting its way through the placid waters of the river, shout on shout from river bank and window and roof rent the sky. What did

they care for the demonstrations of the wise men? The steamer worked, and that was enough.

So we will let the so-called wise men of this day prove to their own satisfaction that the Bible is worthless; *but so long as it works*—redeeming, elevating mankind, causing the moral desert to blossom as the rose—*we will stand by it, so help us God!* It has had attacks before, and has survived them. At the close of the last century there were those who, after demonstrating, as they said, that it was antiquated, and defective, and effete, prophesied that before the middle of this century it would be found only on the shelves of the antiquarian; *but yet it works*. And while your existence and your names, oh enemies of the Bible, are fading from the remembrance of mankind—verifying the prophecy contained in that Word, that “the memory of the wicked shall rot”—the Bible that you despised, translated since your day into 150 more languages, is running through the world, conquering and to conquer, till all the earth shall be subject to its sway.

Brothers, sisters, friends, we have this Bible. It is our priceless heritage. Let us read it more. Let us study it more. Let us love it more. Let us live it more; and let us join hands with this Society in giving it to all the world, to every creature.



